

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 0490

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, JO, US

SUBJ: JORDANIAN OIL

REF: A. STATE 013435 B. AMMAN 0398

1. APPRECIATE DISCUSSION WITH O'CONNELL (REF A) ON NATOMAS CASE.

2. CROWN PRINCE HAS LET ME READ SLOCUM'S CABLE WHICH STATES SOME OF POINTS WHICH WERE PROVIDED TO YOU BY O'CONNELL, BUT IS SO UNCERTAIN AS TO BE, IN CROWN PRINCE'S ASSESSMENT, MERELY A POLITE COVER FOR A TURNDOWN.

3. CROWN PRINCE TREATS NATOMAS CABLE AS A TURNDOWN AND IS NOT NOW PREPARED TO CONSIDER MOVING FURTHER WITH THEM. HE DID RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT GOING INTO PARTNERSHIP, BUT SAID THAT US FIRMS HAVE BEEN SO MERCURIAL THAT NATOMAS COULD WALK OUT ANY TIME LEAVING JORDAN HOLDING THE BAG.

4. CROWN PRINCE FINDS THIS DEEP PERSONAL DISSAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE HE TRUSTED SLOCUM AND WAS ENCOURAGED BY NATOMAS APPROACH AND THEIR PAST SUCCESSORS.

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5. WE UNDERSTAND NATOMAS' SENSE OF POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY, BUT THAT DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE DETERRED US BUSINESS IN THE PAST WHERE THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT MIDDLE EAST HAD SOMETHING TO OFFER -- WITNESS LARGE US BUSINESS COMMITMENTS IN BEIRUT.

6. I DO NOT FEEL I SHOULD TRY TO CARRY THE CAN FOR US INDUSTRY ON THIS ONE. WE HAVE HAD TOO MANY PULL-OUTS FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER AND MY CREDIBILITY WITH CROWN PRINCE ON THIS POINT IS ALREADY OVERSTRAINED. IF NATOMAS IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED, I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR PASSING ON QUIETLY TO SLOCUM FROM ME FACT THAT READING HERE IS THAT THEIR CABLE IS POLITE TURNDOWN AND KISS-OFF. IF THEY WANT TO BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH JORDANIANS, THEY SHOULD DO SO RATHER QUICKLY AS DECISION HAS NOW BEEN MADE TO PROCEED TO FIND INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT AND SEEK JORDAN-FINANCED SEISMIC SURVEY.

7. WE BELIEVE THERE IS A CHANCE, IF SLOCUM IS SERIOUS, IN GETTING JORDANIAN PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT ASS O'CONNELL SUGGESTS. HE WILL HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY TO OFFSET NEGATIVE IMPACT HIS CABLE. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE NATOMAS WITH A REASONABLE STATEMENT OF POLITICAL TENDENCIES IN THE AREA.
PICKERING

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